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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Dear God, a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past. Lord of Time, You divide our lives into years, months, weeks, and hours. As we live our lives, You make us very conscious of the passage of time, the shortness of time to accomplish what we want, and our impatience with other people's priorities in the use of time. We have learned that work expands to fill the time available, but also that deadlines are a part of life.

Here we are at the beginning of a crucial week before the Spring recess begins on Friday. Grant the Senators and their staffs an expeditious use of the hours of this week to accomplish what really needs to be done. Help the parties work together to finish what is crucial for America. Grant us all an acute sense of the value of time and our accountability to You for using it wisely. We believe there is enough time in this week to do what You want done. We press on without pressure but with promptness to Your timing. You are always on time, in time to help us in the use of time. For You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable ROBERT C. BYRD led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. As if in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 705 occur at 5:50 p.m. today, with the remaining provisions of the previous order in effect.

Mr. LOTT. Reserving the right to object, let me clarify if I may. We are moving the vote under this unanimous consent agreement from 6 p.m. to 5:50, and I assume, because we are moving that vote to begin earlier—some Senators might have thought it would begin at 6—if necessary we might delay the conclusion somewhat.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend, it would be the first time we ever delayed a vote, but we will do that.

Mr. LOTT. There is a first time for everything.

I withdraw my reservation.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent we now proceed to a period of morning business until 4:30 today.

I see the Republican leader. I ask he be allowed to speak first, of course, and then Senator GRASSLEY wishes to speak for up to 8 minutes, and then Senator BYRD would speak for up to 40 minutes.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, we are extending the morning business for an hour and a half; I presume that time would be equally divided.

Mr. REID. We will do our best to equally divide it. The only two speakers we know of are Senators GRASSLEY and BYRD. But if someone comes in, we will make sure the minority has equal billing until 6 p.m. It could be hard to get Members over here. We hope others are coming. We will make sure we are as fair as we can in allocating the time.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection to the first request

with respect to setting the vote at 5:50 p.m.?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Is there objection to the second request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak on a subject that I hope will be on the Senate's agenda after we come back from Easter recess, which I think starts at the end of this week. That issue is Trade Promotion Authority for the President.

It is time for the Senate to pass Trade Promotion Authority, not only for President Bush, because he has asked for it, but because every President ought to have this authority. The President needs this authority to help in the reduction of non-tariff trade barriers as well as tariffs and to negotiate international trade agreements.

It has been over a decade since our Nation has had Trade Promotion Authority for the President. Since that time, we have fallen further behind. This map shows how far behind we are. It shows that the rest of the world is no longer going to stand around and wait for the United States to show leadership on trade.

Here you can see all these countries in red. That sea of red represents 111 countries that are a party to more than 130 free trade agreements that do not include the United States of America. The United States was not at the negotiating table for these 130 free trade agreements. How many free trade agreements do we have with other countries? Three!

Until just last year, with the passage of the Jordan Free Trade Agreement, it had been over 6 years since the United States enacted a free trade agreement with another country. Our failure to act, in fact, does make a difference.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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